

MISSION WORK

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Strictly speaking the Brethren church has never yet engaged in *mission* work. She never yet pretended to obey the whole commission, even though she forcibly emphasizes a part of it, and that the secondary part; the primary part is, "*go ye*." As far as I know, the Brethren church has never yet sent a missionary anywhere, unless there was first a call from some isolated member or members. Chicago might possibly be regarded an exception to this sweeping statement, but even there there were members before there was an effort made to establish a mission or church. Jesus says, *go ye*, but the church has been waiting to hear the Macedonian cry, and then thinks she is doing wonders if she now and then heeds a call. She has never complied with the real spirit of the great commission. She has never gone into any country, state or city, unless some members preceded her on purely personal or business considerations. Her work has been in the nature of accommodation rather than missionary.

The great burden upon the Savior's heart during his last days on earth was the evangelization of the whole world. He says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. * * * * Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." Again, just before his ascension his very last words were, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. In his teaching he declared that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations before the end would come. Matt. 24:14. The Brethren church may excuse herself by saying that others have done that, or others are doing it, but, "what is that to thee, follow thou me." How will we excuse ourselves in the day of final accounts if we have neglected or refused to enter into the spirit and purpose of the Master? We claim to have the Holy Spirit, which implies that we have the spirit of the Master. Do we show it in our purpose and work? Was Jesus called to come from city to city, or did he go forth without calls? Was he called to come from heaven, or did his love constrain him to come? There is a great deal of profession these days of having received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Oh, that it were true. Such as receive the gift of the Holy Ghost will also imbibe the spirit and purpose of him who sends the gift. They will go or send others out into unevangelized fields, they will obey the commandments of the Master, as he says, He that loveth me keepeth my commandments, not only baptism and feet-washing, but preaching the gospel to every creature, and to all nations.

Strictly speaking, *mission work* means to

go out into unoccupied, unevangelized fields and witness for Jesus, and this all will aim to do that truly accept and receive the Holy Spirit into their lives; it cannot be otherwise. Dear reader, if you feel no concern about the countless millions that have never yet had an opportunity to learn to know Jesus as a personal Savior, there is something the matter in your spiritual life, if you have any. You may say, I do feel a concern for them but what can I do? Well, if you smoke or chew tobacco you can quit it by the grace of God, and use that money toward evangelizing the world, and he will give you grace right quick if you want the money for that purpose. If you have two farms, you can probably spare one; your son or daughter will get along just as well without it after you are gone, as with it; in all probability better. Instead of educating all your children for professions or business, you can consecrate one or two of them to the Lord for missionaries of the cross, and then educate them for that purpose. People that really receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, do just these very things.

If the Apostle Paul was to come along these days and would learn that there were eight hundred millions of people now living on this earth that had never yet heard of the saving power of Jesus, I think he would ask the church the same question that he asked at Ephesus, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye have believed?" And the reply would probably be about the same as it was then; practically, very few know that there is such a *person* as the Holy Ghost.

The primary purpose of every true child of God ought to be to do the Master's will, and that will is so forcibly expressed in the commission that there can be no mistake about it, hence, the primary purpose of every Christian should be the evangelization of the world, and when this becomes the purpose of the individual it also becomes the purpose of all organized effort. Hence the primary purpose of all our churches, and all missions of all our conventions and conferences should be a compliance with the commission to go into all the world. The church in Philadelphia should constantly exert all her spiritual powers to extend her borders, increase her membership, save her money with a view of becoming able to do more and more for world-wide missions. Just so the church at Johnstown, at Meyersdale, at Warsaw, at Milledgeville, and every other church in the brotherhood. Our missions ought to be established with the same object in view. It is a narrow, selfish view for isolated members to call for missions and missionaries simply that they may have church privileges. If the highest aim of our brethren in Washington is simply to get a church home for themselves it may be some time yet before the Lord will provide the means, but if the primary purpose is to establish a church in the Capital as another base of supplies for world-wide missions, the Lord will no doubt speedily supply the means. Just so in Chicago, in Dayton and other points, let all our brethren

once enter into the purpose and thought of God, and see how He will bless our work, thus verify his words that all power was given to him. The gold and the silver is the Lord's and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Let us show him that we want these things to carry out his purpose and he will lay them at our feet. If we loved God nearly as well as we do ourselves we would easily have from fifty to a hundred thousand dollars a year in the Brethren church for education and missions. This is not a wild, thoughtless statement, it is a *solemn, awful* fact which we must meet and answer for when our rewards are made up.

We are yet a comparatively new organization, but we are old enough to have accomplished more than we have done and I believe that our tardy progress is attributable to a failure to grasp the plan of God. I trust that there may be an awakening to the fact that the Lord is coming soon, and that we should all be earnestly and zealously engaged in the preparatory work. To do this we must first have a much stronger home work then we have now.

I have no doubt that most of us are flattering ourselves that we are growing stronger and stronger, when the real fact of the matter is we are growing weaker and weaker. There is at this time a little spasm of interest in both home and foreign missions, just enough to demonstrate how little we are able to enter successfully upon the work, this fact was deeply impressed upon my mind during my recent visit to Chicago and a few other churches. We have many pressing calls for preaching, and mission work, but do not have the means to respond. I do however believe that the necessary pecuniary means could be secured, but a greater difficulty is, we do not have the men or women properly educated, consecrated and sanctified to send. We have some able, self-sacrificing, successful preachers, but not near enough to supply the demands in our organized churches. It is almost folly to spend money to open up new points as long as we are not able to supply established churches. Our greatest need is preachers and missionaries filled with the Holy Ghost and the word of God, to secure such we must have a school, and hold Bible and missionary conventions to arouse interest, and effect consecration. I am enthusiastic for foreign missions, and for home missions, leading up to foreign work, but I am convinced that we can never have either until we establish a school for education and training. A school is the crying, dire need of the day. Every one can see this fact by a little thought. How many properly equipped ministers have we added to our force since our College is closed? We add from one to two thousand members to the church annually, and yet in four years we have scarcely added any preachers, and if we do not open a school we never will add many, and eventually our work will contract instead of expand. This is a self-evident fact.